Houdini and The Space Cuckoos

By Joseph Lidster

Part Four

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Harry Houdini stared around the theatre as the patrons writhed and coughed, caught in the grip of an alien virus. 'There's got to be a way to stop it,' he found himself shouting. He couldn't believe what was happening. 'Use your sonic wand!'

The Doctor shook his head. 'It won't work!' He started to pace the stage, desperately.

Harry turned and caught the woman in the sequinned dress as she collapsed into him. She was dying in his arms. What had seemed like a mad, fun adventure was now something so much worse. 'Do something, Doctor!'

The Doctor ran up to him. 'The Cuckoos created the virus, but like everything of theirs it's grown, it's natural, it's part of their eco-system!'

'Like the crystals?'

'Exactly!'

'Oh.'

'Oh, Harry?'

'So if there was a crystal and you found it, you could stop this? You could reverse it like you did on the ship?'

The Doctor suddenly shouted at Harry, full of rage. 'Yes, Harry, well done, yes I could do that but there isn't time! I'd have to get into the TARDIS and scan the entire ship to try and find it and...'

The Doctor trailed off as Harry held out his hand. In his palm lay one solitary crystal.

'How did you get that?! You never...' The Doctor grinned. 'No. Don't tell me! Knowing how something's done is worse than a spoiler!'

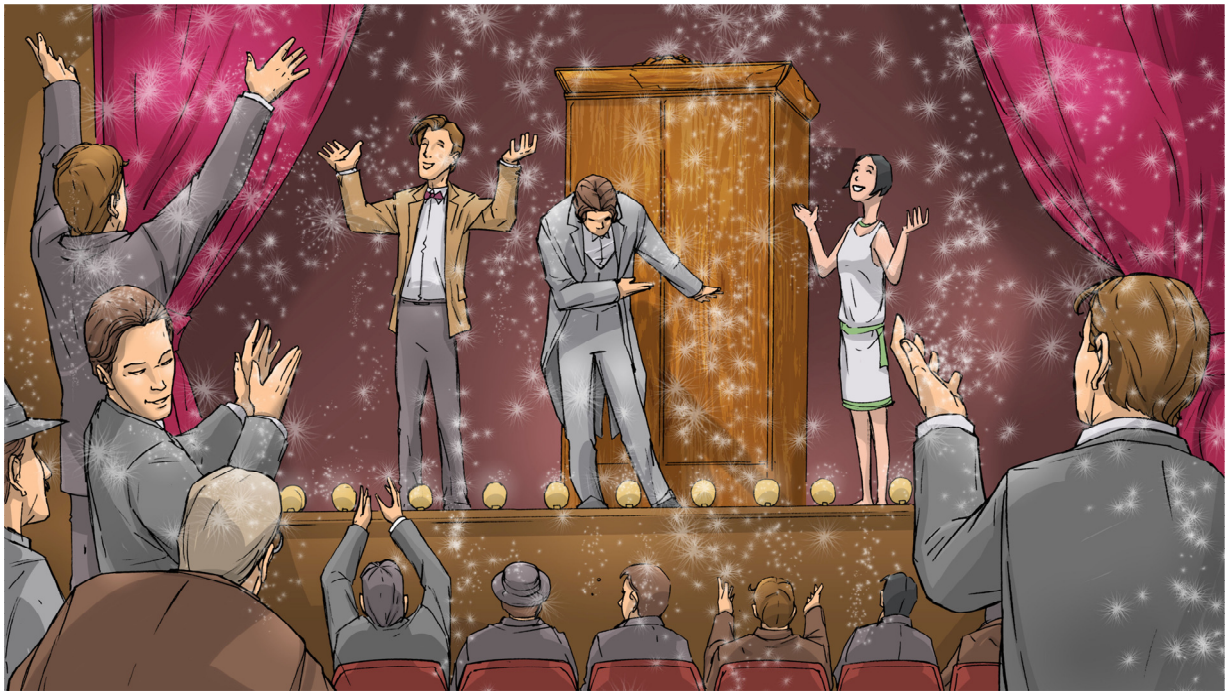
Harry shrugged. He'd wanted to keep one of the crystals as a memento and it had been easy to grind his shoe down onto them in the chamber. He'd picked one out of his sole when safely back in the safe.

The Doctor pointed his sonic screwdriver at the crystal and the green light glowed once more. The crystal started to glow brighter and brighter. The audience started to recover as the strange purple glow lit up the stage and, soon, the entire theatre. Harry stared down at it until the light grew too bright to look at.

Then, suddenly, the crystal started to burn! Harry dropped it onto the floor and jumped behind the safe, pulling the Doctor with him. Purple light flashed so brightly, lighting up the theatre as the crystal exploded into white ash! The ash rose to the ceiling and gently fell, covering the audience, the safe, the sequinned lady, Harry and the Doctor.

The audience were all blinking, confused. The lady in the sequinned dress was climbing to her feet. Everyone was coughing, clearing their throats, unsure as to what had happened and confused by what appeared to be a layer of snow covering them.

Harry poked his head out from the safe and the confused audience started to applaud. Harry grinned. Everything was going to be okay. Then he reached back behind the safe and pulled out the Doctor. The two men stood side-by-side, grinning and bowing as the audience clapped. The lady in the sequinned dress gave the Doctor a kiss on the cheek and he blushed. Harry slapped him on the back, laughing.



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'You made it snow, Doctor,' he said with a grin. 'In the summer! That's more than I've ever done! '

The Doctor grinned and shook his hand before turning to leave the stage.

'You're going?' Harry kept smiling as the audience continued to applaud.

The Doctor nodded. 'I've other planets to save. New people to meet. There's fun to be had. But I'll see you again.'

'Will you?'

'Oh yeah. Cos I kinda lied. I know all your tricks.'

Harry stopped smiling. 'How?'

'Not long from now, you're going to teach me them. I won't remember this adventure, because I'll be younger… but look older. And you'll just be older.'

Harry just laughed. Like everything with the Doctor, he'd just assume it made sense. He shook the Doctor's hand and thanked him. Then he, too, started to applaud as the Doctor climbed back into the safe. He closed the door to the safe then, after a few seconds, he opened it again. The Doctor and his TARDIS were gone.

And the audience kept on clapping. Harry grinned. He knew they were applauding because they hadn't just seen him do his usual trick. They'd seen something new. Something even more brilliant. Because they'd seen the Doctor. And so had he.

THE END

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